

January 18, 2001

Dear Stakeholder:

Addressing water quality impacts from air deposition of toxics and nitrogen is an increasingly important environmental challenge. These pollutants can adversely impact both human health and the environment. Atmospheric deposition is a major contributor to the overall loading of mercury to U.S. waters. As many of you know, mercury is the most frequently listed reason for fish consumption advisories. As of December 1999, 41 States had issued fish advisories for mercury. Additionally, atmospheric deposition of nitrogen contributes to eutrophication in a significant number of our coastal watersheds. Roughly 10–40% of the nitrogen that reaches East and Gulf Coast estuaries is transported and deposited via the atmosphere.

To respond to these air-water interface issues the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Air and Radiation (OAR) and Office of Water (OW) developed the enclosed *Air-Water Interface Work Plan*. The purpose of this work plan is to outline a schedule of specific activities that we are committing to undertake using the authorities of both the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. This collaborative effort will help to coordinate our Offices' programs and to track EPA's progress in reducing atmospheric deposition of toxics and nitrogen to all waterbodies in the United States. EPA will review and update the work plan every two years.

In the *Deposition of Air Pollutants to the Great Waters: Third Report to Congress*, EPA committed to developing a work plan to address problems from air deposition. To meet this commitment, EPA drafted and sent out the work plan for informal comment and stakeholder input in the summer of 2000. We received 146 comments from over 18 stakeholders. Commenters included seven State agencies, non-governmental organizations, industry representatives, other Federal agencies and the public. These comments were reviewed by both of our Offices and led to many changes for the final version of this initial work plan.

In general, commenters were supportive of the work plan and its purpose of promoting our increased interoffice collaboration. Many of the comments helped EPA clarify its strategy and activities and were incorporated into the work plan. The following is a summary of the comments received and some examples of how EPA is addressing them.

The most frequent comment was that the emissions inventories, modeling tools and monitoring networks need to be improved or expanded. EPA agrees with these comments and has identified activities in the work plan that will help to improve and expand these tools and resources.

Other commenters stressed the importance of supporting the efforts of State, Tribal and local agencies in their work in addressing air deposition issues. EPA agrees and has identified tools and outreach activities to promote the transfer of knowledge on air deposition issues. Examples include the development of a handbook to help watershed managers understand air deposition issues, and the greater use of outreach mechanisms such as scientific workshops, regional meetings, and the use of the Internet. Activities also include efforts to help States address the challenges of developing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) involving loadings from air deposition.

Finally, a few commenters expressed their concern that the present regulatory activities would not adequately reduce air toxics and nitrogen deposition to meet water quality needs. We believe that the Office of Air and Radiation and Office of Water have put forth a set of actions that will significantly reduce air deposition over the next several years. Many of our regulatory programs (e.g., Maximum Available Control Technology standards, NO<sub>x</sub> reductions under the Acid Rain Program, NO<sub>x</sub> SIP Call and mobile source controls) have not been fully implemented and the expected air emission reductions have not yet occurred. As these programs are implemented, EPA will continually evaluate the need to apply any further regulatory actions to address air deposition issues.

Most importantly, as we have discussed on a number of occasions, we encourage active engagement with stakeholders on this and future work plans. We anticipate that we will be meeting with many of you on an ongoing basis as we implement this plan and as we revise the plan in the future. We would like to thank all those who provided input into this work plan and we look forward to working with you and others as we implement it.

Questions on this effort should be addressed to Peter Murchie, OAR (919 541-1051, [murchie.peter@epa.gov](mailto:murchie.peter@epa.gov)) or Debora Martin, OW (202 260-2729, [martin.debora@epa.gov](mailto:martin.debora@epa.gov)).

Sincerely,

John Seitz, Director  
Office of Air Quality and Planning Standards

Robert H. Wayland III, Director  
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Geoffrey H. Grubbs, Director

Office of Science and Technology

Enclosure

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